

Remarks:

1. Claims 1-2 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over German Patent Application DE 3433108 in view of U.S. Pat. No. 4,695,508.

Claims 1-2 and 4 have been cancelled. In view thereof, applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the stated rejection.

2. Claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 6,099,938.

Claims 1 and 4 have been cancelled. In view thereof, applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the stated rejection.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C §112, second paragraph as being indefinite, but would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the aforesaid rejection, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claim 3 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 1 and 2, from which original claim 3 depended. The Examiner objected to the use of the term "substantially" within the claim as originally drafted. Applicants disagree with the Examiner's rejection. The term "substantially" is a recognized term of relativity (see MPEP §2173.05(b)). The present specification clearly describes what is meant by "substantially flexible". Nevertheless, applicants have deleted the term to overcome the rejection, and thereby removed the limitation imposed by said term.

New claims 20-22 have been added. These claims do not add new matter, and are added to claim subject matter which the applicants regard as the present invention.

As applicants have traversed the rejections made by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that the stated rejections be withdrawn, claims 3 and 20-22 be allowed, and the present application be passed onto issuance. No additional fee is

believed due with the present application. In the event a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3381.

Respectfully submitted,



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